



**State of Connecticut**  
**Latino and Puerto Rican**  
**Affairs Commission**

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**Chairman**

*Richard A. Cruz*

**Vice-Chair**

*Elena Trueworthy, M.S.*

**Secretary**

*Emanuela Palmares-Leaf*

**Treasurer**

*Yolanda Castillo*

**Parliamentarian:**

*George Hernández*

**Commissioners:**

*Ramón L. Arroyo*

*Migdalia Castro*

*Ana Gonzalez*

*Jay Gonzalez*

*Dr. Ruby O'Neill*

*Dr. Agnes Quiñones*

*Ruben Rodríguez*

*Dr. Eugene M. Salorio*

*Christian Soto*

*Pablo Soto*

*Feny Taylor*

*Danny Torres*

**Executive Director**

*Werner Oyanadel*

**Special Projects Director**

*Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández*

**Associate Commission Analyst**

*Orlando Rodríguez*

**Administrative Assistant**

*Clarisa Cardone*

**MINUTES**  
**LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting**  
**October 21, 2015**  
**Legislative Office Building Room 2D**  
**Hartford, CT**  
**5:30 p.m.**

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Yolanda Castillo, Migdalia Castro, Richard A. Cruz, Jay González, George Hernández, Dr. Ruby O'Neill, Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Christian Soto and Feny Taylor
Commissioners on the Phone:	Danny Torres
Commissioners Absent:	Ana González, Emanuela Palmares Leaf, Rubén Rodríguez, Dr. Eugene M. Salorio, Pablo Soto and Elena Trueworthy, M.S.
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director, Clarisa Cardone, Administrative Assistant

**Tape 1 A**

**Chairman Cruz** asked Commissioner Castillo, Treasurer to do roll call in the absence of Commissioner Palmares Leaf, Secretary. Quorum was established.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

NONE

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion made to approve the minutes of July 15, 2015 by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Motion made to approve the Special Commission Meeting minutes of September 30, 2015 Special LPRAC Commission meeting by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- Thanked everyone at LPRAC for a wonderful and successful executed 19th Annual Scholarship Fundraiser and Community Leaders Awards Celebration. Commissioner Elena Trueworthy did a great job as a Mistress of Ceremonies and Emanuela Palmares-Leaf should be commended for her in-kind contributions to the graphical design of the program book and for her creativity with the flowers that were in each of our tables the night of our event.
- Commended, for the record, all our sponsors which included Verizon Wireless, Eastern Connecticut State University, AARP, Central Connecticut State University, CHFA – CT Housing Finance Authority, Connecticut State Employee Association, City of Hartford and City of New Haven's Mayor's Office, CT Green Bank, Hispanic Federation, Dressler Law Offices, 4Cs – Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges, Connecticut Hispanic Democratic Caucus, Telemundo, American Savings Bank Foundation, Aquarium Water Supply, and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving;
- Informed everyone about ongoing activities, including but not limited to, the Commissioner from the State Department of Administrative Services and the LPRAC Staff on state procurement outreach. He advised them of the importance of their agency to reach out to the Latino community and offered to translate their brochures onto Spanish.



- Commended our Executive Director, Commissioner Palmares Leaf and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal for successfully assisting him seeking an emergency/visa for a relative of Vivian Leticia Rodrigues who passed away in an accident a few months away. Vivian and her boyfriend were at Lake Mohegan biking on Labor Day. She hit the breaks to avoid a car and hit the curb. She had been in the hospital since in a medically induced coma. Vivian was here temporarily from Brazil and did not have any next of kin in the US. Family in Brazil had been instructed to come to the US by the St. Vincent staff to make arrangements and decisions regarding life support but their visas were denied. With our referral we were able to have Vivian's brother able to get a Visa to help with this tragic situation.

**Motion made to accept the Chairperson's report by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Mr. Oyanadel** briefed the commission on the following:

LPRAC these past few months has excelled in a number of areas including, but not limited to, recognizing the accomplishments of our Latino leaders on Saturday, October 17, 2015; co-sponsored a discussion about closing the educational achievement gap through family engagement along with our colleagues from the Latino Endowment Fund/Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (event took place 10/13/15 at a school in Hartford); releasing fast facts about English Language learners (see Orlando's report for more information); celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a presence in social media, at the State Capitol/LOB, at the State Department of Transportation and with our new partners at the Hartford Public Library who have graciously agreed to host our US Hispanic Celebrities Stamp Exhibit until the end of the month of October this year; We also co-hosted our first Brazilian Flag Raising Ceremony on Sept. 24, 2015; conducted a legislative retreat with our board members to help us draft a strategic plan (i.e., Legislative Agenda) which will shape and guide what LPRAC will do in the CT legislature during the 2016 Legislative Session (9/12/15 in the City of Danbury). We released an in-depth report which indicated the need for the State Government to improve communications with Spanish-Speaking residents in State Emergencies (8/20/15); Informed the Latino and main stream media about a grant received by LPRAC to improve oral health awareness in Connecticut for a total of \$40,000.00 (released 9/18/15); signed an agreement with the State Department of Public Health to conduct a media campaign about lead poisoning in CT for a total of \$100,000.00; provided testimony in the City of Windham about the closure of medical programs at Windham Hospital; attended public events with our congressional delegation regarding the Puerto Rican Debt Crisis;

**Motion made to accept the Executive Director's report by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Castillo.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Commissioner Arroyo** said that Mr. Oyanadel spoke about the event on Saturday which looked very nice and I would like to know more details, i.e., how many attendees were there, out of those attendees, what was the profit that the commission got out of that particular event that way if we organize another one in the future to see how we can improve to that.

**Mr. Oyanadel** indicated that a full report would be given to all LPRAC Commissioners on our November meeting but indicated that our preliminary review shows a total received of \$30,300 and prior year remaining funds are \$12,610 for a total available of \$42,910.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**TABLED**

#### **PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Quiñones** said that there are a couple of announcements that she wants to share as follows:

1. There will be a press release available regarding Prison Gerrymandering; it will include sponsors and supporters, LPRAC, ACLU, the Hispanic Federation and the Connecticut League of Women Voters that will happen on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 2015.
2. We are also tentatively scheduled to go on a radio show that same day; to discuss the issue of Prison Gerrymandering and that Mr. Rodríguez would be present at the radio show.



3. At the November Board meeting, Dr. Estela Lopez do a presentation at the Public Participation portion of our agenda regarding the news of the ACT/SAT testing in the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
4. We had spoken during our Retreat about entertaining another Forum like the one we had in English Language Learners and call it Latino Policy Day; it will be a full day of Latino Policy issues. We are hoping to attract community based organizations, supporters, legislators that care about our community. We are thinking of having this on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 at the Capitol Room 310. We don't want to lose sight of the fact that the needs of our ELL students continue today and the Hispanic Federation agreed to do a presentation how teen pregnancy prevention it's key among young Latinas. Mr. Rodriguez is working to secure a list of participants.
5. Mr. Rodríguez is not here tonight because he is invited to record on the Stan Simpson show on the issue of out migration and in migration for Connecticut.

**Motion made to accept the Priorities & Legislation Committee report by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.**

**Discussion:**

Mr. Oyanadel mentioned that one of our requirements of Oral Health is to have a forum and having a conversation with Mr. Rodríguez, we are hoping that we can attach one subsection of that conversation.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**TABLED**

**RBA COMMITTEE**

**TABLED**

**ADHOC COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Quiñones said that in everyone's packets there is a document. This Ad Hoc Committee worked very hard and we want to thank Commissioner O'Neill for her leadership, her insight and her contribution to the development of a very thorough, comprehensive and thoughtful process. What we wanted to do as we get ready to entertain a short session of the Connecticut General Assembly 2016, and potential nomination and appointments of judges and elected official and leadership positions that happen throughout the year we felt that it would be important rather than try to come before this commission, have the candidates speak about themselves and for us to get the information right then and there. We felt that we needed to get our hands around the process that would help the commission make a very educated decision with regards to endorsement of potential candidates for positions. Commissioner O'Neil with the help of Mr. Oyanadel and Commissioner Hernández worked diligently in reviewing the number of endorsements and guidelines that have been already in place by other entities and in putting together this document. She asked the Chair so that the commission members have the opportunity to read that we table and we come back at our next commission meeting and have an opportunity to ask questions, review the document in advance and for us to provide more information and then we can do an action and protocol.

Commissioner O'Neill wanted to thank Commissioner Quiñones for her leadership on this committee as well and all the research she did and all the research that Mr. Oyanadel did as well.

Mr. Oyanadel wanted to also commend the commissioners that worked on this project. For those commissioners that were not part of this committee, the main reason we wanted to consider this as a priority for LPRAC is that in the past we would get somebody to say "you should endorse this person" and we would bring to you the month a resume and you would look at it quickly and you really wouldn't have time to vet that individual. The process that the commission during this AdHoc created is a really thought out process by which an individual that is seeking an endorsement from LPRAC will have to put themselves to respond the questionnaire, to also meet with members of the commission, take questions and then a committee will be put together to analyze those comments so that when the commission endorses somebody and sends you a recommendation, you can feel that the commission did a great job vetting that individual so that you are not going to get any egg faced or anything that is going to make us embarrassed for somebody that we are endorsing. I think it's really taking us to the level that we need to be as we are increasing our influence at the State Capitol, we are going to get more people requesting our endorsement and this process will really allow us to really know about this person. He commends the commissioners who spent a lot of time of their regular hours to get this report to you. He highly encourages everyone to read it and send any types of feedback and



improvements. The committee wants to talk to the commission to actually do something similar so that when we endorse our students we have something similar.

#### **Tape 1 B**

**Commissioner Castillo** asked how we would assess accountability for those people that we endorse. She doesn't see it in the document, not saying that we need to add it but we have to make people accountable too.

**Commissioner Quiñones** replied that it is a very difficult to engage. The best thing that we can do is whoever comes to this commission will be honest, will speak with a level of integrity and will be committed to deliver on what they say they are going to do. This is the best that we can do. We could entertain a way by which we can keep track of the candidates that we endorse in whether they are successful in their appointment and make it a point through another Ad Hoc committee to keep tab on that.

**Commissioner Castillo** said that they can come here and report to us.

**Commissioner O'Neill** stated that she doesn't think we are going to have any authority to say please come to us and report but we might consider saying during the interview that we will be watching your decisions and we will speak at your reappointment hearing before the Judiciary Committee.

**Commissioner Arroyo** mentioned that the Governor is the one who basically nominates the Judges. First, before he nominates them, he goes through a review process by a committee with all lawyers, a big committee that makes the selections of who they are going to recommend to the Governor and then the Governor recommends to the Legislature then it would go to the Judiciary Committee that will be doing a process. What will be the impact, we as a commission, are going to create in that type of endorsement. As you know, to be a judge you have to file an application, you have to have a certain time in the legal practice before you be eligible to apply to be a judge.

**Commissioner Hernández** said that this is a first attempt that we, as a commission have formalized a nationally vetting out a process for someone seeking endorsement from our commission. The reality is that most of these things happen behind closed doors and the Latinos are the last to know. We are beginning to assert the position that we have been given to speak to the Latino community on those issues.

**Mr. Oyanadel** added that the process that we are preparing and that we are submitting to you will only go into effect after the individuals have been endorsed by the Judicial Selection Committee (JSC). If they have not received the approval or endorsement of that JSC, our endorsement will not kick in. We do have a disclaimer in this form that says "If LPRAC discovers what it considers to be compromising information about an applicant after the LPRAC or JSC endorsement; LPRAC reserves the right to rescind the LPRAC endorsement".

**Motion made to accept the Ad Hoc Committee report made by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Chairman Cruz** appointed Commissioner Hernández as Chairman of the Nomination Committee. He then asked Commissioner Hernández if he accepts the position.

**Commissioner Hernández** accepted the position.

**Commissioner Castillo** asked what positions are open.

**Chairman Cruz** said that all Executive Board positions are open come November.

**Mr. Oyanadel** said Statute highlights the position of the Chairman. The person that will take the lead in that Nominating Committee cannot be considered for any office and that elections are going to be in December. The job of the Nominating Committee is to designate and understanding of people that may be interested in running so the Chair will be contacting everybody to find out if you are interested in a position. If you are interested in a position, you will have to fill out a questionnaire. All that process is what the Chair is going to be learning about and in the month of December, he will put together an election and the process by which people are going to vote. The Chair of that committee will be responsible for a report on people that are interested in running and for producing the elections process.

**Chairman Cruz** asked Mr. Oyanadel if there is a particular number to those in that committee or is it open.



**Commissioner Hernández** clarified that in reading the By-Laws, that committee has to be made up of at least two members minimum. It would be much more logistically manageable to have the Chair as you have nominated myself and that we have two other individuals so that we have three people in that committee.

**Chairman Cruz** said that all those interested, please contact Commissioner Hernández for further discussion.

**Motion made to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf  
Secretary  
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc